

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5149

INFO AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

L EPS/AMEMBASSY PARIS 200

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 0254

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT CH

SUBJECT: CRITICISM OF TENG HSIAO-PING

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: EVENTS IN PEKING THIS WEEK, REVIEWED BELOW, HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT VICE PREMIER TENG HSIAO-PING AND A NUMBER OF THE DOMESTIC POLICIES ASSOCIATED WITH HIM AND, INDEED, WITH THE LATE PREMIER CHOU EN-LAI ARE UNDER SHARP ATTACK FROM THE "LEFT." WE, AND MOST OTHER FOREIGN OBSERVERS IN PEKING, SEE THIS AS MANIFESTING A MAJOR STRUGGLE IN THE TOP LEADERSHIP WITH THE SUCCESSION TO MAO AND THE DOMESTIC POLICIES TO BE PURSUED IN CHINA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BEING THE KEY MATTERS AT ISSUE. WHAT IS HAPPENING BEHIND THE SCENES IS OBSCURE AND AT THIS POINT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT THE DURATION AND OUTCOME OF THE STRUGGLE. BUT OUR VERY PRELIMINARY VIEW IS THAT THOSE WHO HAVE USED THEIR PRESENT CONTROL OF THE PEKING, PRESS, RADIO AND CAMPUSES TO SURFACE THE STRUGGLE

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MAY ACTUALLY BE ON THE DEFENSIVE. END SUMMARY

2. LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE FROM VARIOUS UNITS IN PEKING ARE REPORTEDLY BEING BUSSED TO PEKING UNIVERSITY TO VIEW POSTERS PUT UP THERE IN THE PAST FEW DAYS WHICH INDIRECTLY CRITICIZE VICE PREMIER TENG HSIAO-PING. POSTERS CONTAIN UNMISTAKABLE REFERENCES TO TENG SUCH AS "OLD CAPITALIST ROADER," AND PEOPLE WHO DO NOT CARE " WHETHER THE CAT IS BLACK OR WHITE SO LONG AS IT CATCHES MICE" (FROM A JULY 1962 TENG SPEECH), AND CHINESE STUDENTS READING THE POSTERS HAVE COMMENTED THAT THEY ARE INDEED MEANT TO CRITICIZE TENG. HE IS ACCUSED OF BRINGING BACK UNREPENTENT CAPITALIST ROADERS AS REHABILITEES; SUPPORTING LIU PING AND CHOU JUNG-HSIN ON THE EDUCATION DEBATE; OPPOSING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION; OPPOSING THE THREE WAY ALLIANCE OF OLD, MIDDLE AGED, AND YOUNG; CRITICIZING CADRES WHO ROSE TO POWER DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION; BEING A "CAPITULATIONIST" LIKE SUNG CHIANG; HAVING EMPHASIZED PRODUCTION AT THE EXPENSE OF CLASS STRUGGLE; AND HAVING FAILED TO RELEASE ONE OF THE FACTIONAL LEADERS IN HANGCHOW JAILED LAST YEAR. THERE IS A SIMILAR POSTER CAMPAIGN AT TSINGHAU UNIVERSITY. ONE POSTER READ THERE BY FOREIGN VISITORS ON THE 13TH WAS ENTITLED "THE CAT AND THE KEY LINK" AND REFERRED TO A "PRIME EXPONENT OF REVISIONISM" AND "LEADER OF CAPITALIST ROADERS" WHO ALWAYS HAD TIES WITH KIU SHAO-CHI. CHINESE OFFICIALS ACCOMPANYING THE PKOUP WOULD SAY NOTHING ABOUT THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP SITUATION OR THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE POSTERS; THEY CONFINED THEMSELVES TO A STOCK DESCRIPTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEBATE IN THE EDUCATIONAL SPHERE SINCE LAST OCTOBER.

3. THE LEAD STORY IN THE FEBRUARY 13 PEOPLE'S DAILY ("WE MUST CONTINUE TO STUDY THE CRITICISM OF CONFUCIUS" BY LI CHENG) ESCALATES THE ATTACK ON THOSE "UNREPENTENT CAPITALIST ROADERS CRITICIZED DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION" AND CONTAINS SOME OF THE SAME CRITICISMS AS THE CAMPUS POSTERS. REFERENCES IN THE ANTI-CONFUCIUS CAMPAIGN OF 1974 CRITICAL OF REHABILITEES CONSTITUTE A MAIN THEME OF THE ARTICLE.

4. TENG, HIMSELF, REMAINS OUT OF SIGHT. A HIGH-RANKING WEST GERMAN DELEGATION NOW IN PEKING HAD ASKED IN BONN THAT THEY BE ALLOWED TO MEET WITH TENG AND WERE LED TO EXPECT THE MEETING. WHEN THEY RENEWED THEIR REQUEST IN PEKING, HOWEVER, THE CHINESE

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SAID A MEETING WITH TENG WOULD NOW BE "INCONVENIENT." SEVERAL MILITARY ATTACHES WERE TOLD LAST SATURDAY BY A MINISTRY OF DEFENSE OFFICIAL, IN RESPONSE TO THEIR INQUIRIES, THAT TENG RETAINED HIS OPPOSITION AS PLA CHIEF OF STAFF, BUT WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO CONFIRM THE STORY THAT CHINESE OFFICIALS HAVE SAID THAT HE RETAINS ALL HIS OTHER TITLES AS WELL. HOWEVER, THE SRI LANKANS WERE TOLD THIS WEEK THAT ANOTHER PERSON HEAVILY CRITICIZED, MINISTER OF EDUCATION CHOU JUNG-HSIN, WILL ACT AS PRC HOST FOR AN UPCOMING

SRI LANKAN EDUCATIONAL DELEGATION.

5. WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE THAT THE CHINESE HAVE AS YET DEVELOPED A LINE TO USE WITH FOREIGNERS IN PEKING ON THESE EVENTS SIMILAR TO THAT REPORTED HK1603. SEVERAL LOWER-LEVEL CHINESE OFFICIALS HAVE ADMITTED TO FOREIGNERS THEIR SURPRISE AT HUA'S APPOINTMENT AND THEIR UNCERTAINTY ABOUT WHAT THE PEKING UNIVERSITY POSTERS AND THE PEOPLE'S DAILY ARTICLES MAY FORESHADOW.

6. AT THIS POINT, MOST FOREIGN OBSERVERS IN PEKING ARE WILLING TO CONCEDE THERE IS AS YET VERY LITTLE SOLID EVIDENCE NOW AVAILABLE TO PIECE TOGETHER ACCURATELY WHAT LED TO HUA KUO-FENG'S APPOINTMENT AS ACTING PREMIER OR WHAT IS NOW TAKING PLACE WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP. BUT NOW VERY FEW DOUBT, THOUGH MANY DID EARLIER IN THE WEEK, THAT A MAJOR STRUGGLE IS UNDERWAY IN THE TOP LEADERSHIP, WITH THE SUCCESSION TO MAO AND THE DOMESTIC POLICIES TO BE PURSUED IN CHINA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BEING THE KEY MATTERS AT ISSUE. THERE ARE MANY RUMORS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE PARTY LEADERSHIP COULD NOT AGREE DURING THE JANUARY MEETINGS ON REPLACEMENTS IN THE POLITBURO STANDING COMMITTEE, CHOICES THAT IN TURN WOULD DETERMINE THE CHOICE OF PREMIER. THERE ARE RUMORS THAT THE MEETINGS ARE CONTINUING; OTHERS THAT THEY WILL RESUME SHORTLY.

7. IF ONE WERE TO JUDGE SOLELY FROM THE CAMPUS POSTERS AND THIS WEEK'S PEOPLE'S DAILY AND KUANGMING DAILY OUTPUT, ONE WOULD PREDICT THE FALL FROM POWER OF TENG HSIAO-PING, THE CHASTISEMENT OF MANY OTHER LEADERS, REHABILITATED OR NOT, AND A SHARPLY LEFTWARD SHIFT IN DOMESTIC POLICY. BUT SUCH A PREDICTION WOULD, WE BELIEVE, GIVE UNDUE WEIGHT TO NOISE FROM THE LEFT OF CHINA'S IDEOLOGICAL SPECTRUM, FROM LEADERS WHO DESPITE THEIR PRESENT CONTROL OF THE PEKING PRESS, RADIO AND CAMPUSES MAY ACTUALLY BE ON THE DEFENSIVE. THE NATURE OF THE NOISE
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SUGGESTS TO US THAT THOSE UNDER ATTACK (POSSIBLY INCLUDING ACTING PREMIER HUA KUO-FENG) MAY IN FACT BE IN THE ASCENDANCY BEHIND THE SCENES. BUT THIS IS A VERY PRELIMINARY VIEW OF A STRUGGLE THAT COULD BE STILL IN AN EARLY STAGE.
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